MINUTES

OF A

GENERAL CONFERENCE

OF THE

MEMBERS

OF THE

NEW CHURCH,

SIGNIFIED BY THE

NEW JERUSALEM

IN THE

REVELATION.

Held in GREAT EAST-CHEAP, LONDON,

From the 9th to the 13th of *April*, 1792—36.

LONDON:

PRINTED IN THE YEAR 1792.

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LONDON:

1609/4603

MINUTES
OF A
GENERAL CONFERENCE, &c.

MONDAY, *April* 9, 1792=36.

THE General Conference of the Members of the New Church met this Day, agreeably to the laſt Adjournment, to take into conſideration the moſt effectual Means, under Divine Providence, for promoting the farther Eſtabliſhment of the New Jeruſalem.

The Conference being opened by the Lord's Prayer, Mr. A. Hunt, of Briſtol, was unanimouſly elected Preſident of the preſent Conference, and Mr. R. Hindmarſh, Secretary.

The following Perſons were then appointed as a Committee to expedite the Buſineſs of the preſent Conference:

THOMAS PARKER, of London, Counſellor at Law,
THOMAS WRIGHT, Eſq. Wirkſworth,
Mr. JOHN HOYLE, Halifax,
Rev. F. LEICESTER, London,
Rev. R. BRANT, Briſtol,
Mr. JONATHAN PRATT, London,
Mr. STEPHEN HOLDER,
Mr. HENRY PECKITT,
Mr. WILLIAM HILLINGWORTH,
Mr. ROBERT COOPER, Birmingham,
Mr. JAMES CRUDEN, London,
Mr. JOHN WILLIAMSON, Liverpool.

The Minutes of the laſt Conference were read.

Letters were read from the following Perſons and Societies:

The SOCIETY at Birmingham,
HENRY BANKS, of Saliſbury,
JAMES GREEN, of Demerary, in South America,
JOSEPH LEE, of Sheffield,
The SOCIETY at Liverpool,
WILLIAM HILL, of Wolverhampton.

Several of the above Letters contained Remarks and Hints for a Form of Eccleſiaſtical Government for the New Church.

Mr. HANDS read certain Propoſitions, which he ſubmitted to the Conſideration of this Conference.

The Meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer, and adjourned till the next Morning at Nine o'Clock.

TUESDAY, *April* 10, 1792=36.

THE Conference met this Morning agreeable to Adjournment, and was opened by the Lord's Prayer.

On reading the Minutes of the laſt Conference, Article by Article, they were confirmed as far as Page 11, except the Preamble adopted by the London Society, which remains for Confirmation till the New Church Bill has received the Sanction of Parliament.

The Minute in Page 13, reſpecting the Recommending and Ordination of Miniſters, was read and confirmed.

The Forms of Ordination of Miniſters, and Conſecration of Temples, were ordered to ſtand over for Conſideration till to-morrow.

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The Meeting concluded with the Lord's Prayer, and was adjourned till the next Morning at Nine o'Clock.

WEDNESDAY, *April* 11, 1792—36.

THE Members of the Conference being again aſſembled, and the Meeting opened by the Lord's Prayer, Mr. Hands moved, that the Minute in Page 12, of the Proceedings of laſt Conference, reſpecting the Form of Ordination of Miniſters, be not confirmed till the next Annual Conference; and that 100 Copies of the Form heretofore adopted, be printed and diſtributed among the ſeveral Societies of the New Church, that their Judgment of the ſame may be ſent by their Delegates to the next Conference. Seconded by Mr. Hoyle, and ordered accordingly.

It was likewiſe moved, that the Minute in Page 13, reſpecting the Form of Conſecration of Temples, be not confirmed till the next Conference; and that 100 Copies of the ſame be printed with the Form of Ordination of Miniſters, for the like Purpoſe as the laſt Minute, which, being duly ſeconded, was ordered accordingly.

On Mr. Charles Harford's preſenting ſome Remarks made by the Liverpool Society, on the Liturgy at preſent uſed in the New Church, Mr. Hands moved, that a Letter be drawn up by the Committee of Conference, requeſting the Opinion of all the Societies concerning the Liturgy, with their Remarks and Amendments, to be ſent by their reſpective Delegates to the next Annual Conference, for the Conſideration of the Church at

large; that they may adopt ſuch a Form as may tend to the Union of all the Societies; and that when the Letter is approved by Conference, 100 Copies be printed, and ſent with the Forms of Ordination and Conſecration, for the Purpoſe aforeſaid. Seconded by Mr. Williamſon, and ordered accordingly.

A Motion was made by Mr. Thomas Wright, and ſeconded by Mr. Brant, that the Minute in Page 14, reſpecting a Burial Service, ſtand over for the Conſideration of the next Conference, and that in the mean Time the Societies of the New Church be requeſted to prepare Draughts of the ſame. Ordered.

Mr. Hands moved, whether it be neceſſary to appoint annually a Preſident, Treaſurer, and Secretary, with other Directors reſiding among the different Societies of the New Church, to manage and direct the Affairs of the Church at large, agreeably to ſuch Rules as ſhall be laid down by Conference. Seconded by Mr. Bragg, and unanimouſly agreed to.

It was then reſolved,

1. That the Directors ſhall have the Care and Management of all the general Concerns of the Church.

2. That the Treaſurer, with the Conſent of the Preſident and Directors, or the Majority of them, ſhall have Power to apply all Contributions on Behalf of the Church at large, according to their Direction; and ſhall be accountable to the General Conference for all Receipts and Expenditures.

3. That every Miniſter, deſirous of travelling to viſit diſtant Societies of the New Church, is requeſted to communicate his intention to the Preſident, that he may be acquainted with the various Societies in different

Parts

Parts of the Kingdom, and that another Miniſter may be ſent to officiate during his Abſence.

4. Any Society, being in need of a Miniſter, or deſirous of conſulting the Church at large on any Buneſs, is requeſted to inform the Preſident, that he may acquaint the Directors in the various Societies of the New Church.

The following Perſons were then appointed Directors of the New Church for the Year enſuing:

SAMUEL HANDS, of Birmingham, *Preſident*,
——— THOMAS WRIGHT, of Wirkſworth, *Treaſurer*,
JOHN BELLAMY, of London, *Secretary*,
JONATHAN PRATT, of London,
THOMAS YOUNG, of London,
ANTHONY HUNT, of Briſtol,
JAMES KELSON, of Briſtol,
CHARLES HARFORD, of Liverpool,
THOMAS BANNING, of Liverpool,
WILLIAM MOTT, of Birmingham,
JOHN BRAGG, of Birmingham,
SAMUEL MANN, of Mancheſter,
——— CLOUGH, of Mancheſter,
JOHN HOYLE, of Halifax,
SAMUEL BUCKNELL, of Stroud, in Glouceſterſhire,
WILLIAM CLARK, of Newport, Iſle of Wight.
HENRY BANKS, of Saliſbury,

A Letter from Mr. Robert Green, of Hull, was read.

A Letter from the Mancheſter Society was alſo read.

Mr. Hands moved, that it be recommended to each of the Societies of the New Church, to ſend Delegates

according to the Proportion of their Number. If the Society is leſs than Thirty, they may ſend One Delegate to the next General Conference; if between Thirty and Sixty, Two Delegates, and ſo on in Proportion, One Delegate to every Thirty of their Number.

This Motion was ſeconded by Mr. Bragg, and ordered by the Conference; the Societies are therefore requeſted to act accordingly.

The Meeting was concluded with the Lord's Prayer, and adjourned till the next Morning at Ten o'Clock.

THURSDAY, *April* 12, 1792=36.

THE Members of the Conference being aſſembled, the Meeting was opened with the Lord's Prayer.

A Motion was made, and duly ſeconded, that ſome general hints be ſubmitted to the different Societies of the New Church, for their Regulation and Support. The Plan which Mr. Hands brought forward for that Purpoſe, having been read, was ordered to be printed in the Minutes of this Conference, accompanied with a Requeſt, that the different Societies of the New Church, would favour the next Conference with their Remarks on the ſame.

The following is the Copy of the Plan propoſed for Conſideration:

The Grand Principles of the Heavenly Doctrines now revealed, we find to conſiſt in Order; Order is the Frontiſpiece of all Creation; it is the Language of the Word and the Writings, and I truſt it will be a ſtanding Rule, not only for the New Church at large, but

alſo for every individual Society; for whoſe Regulation I propoſe the following Plan:

Whenever a Number of the Readers of the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg wiſh to form a Society, let them chooſe Three ſolid intelligent Men, for their Preſident, Treaſurer, and Secretary, with Four others, which ſeven will act as a ſtanding Committee, who ſhall be annually elected. Let the Society inveſt theſe Seven Men with power to direct the concerns of their reſpective Church. The buſineſs of theſe Seven Men is to attend to all neceſſary matters for the eſtabliſhment of their Society, who ſhall write to the Preſident and Directors of the Church at large, for whatever advice and aſſiſtance that may be neceſſary. The Society will find it their Duty to act in Harmony together, and to make ſuch Collections for the purchaſe of Books, the payment of Debts, and the acquittal of ſuch other expences, as their exigencies may require.

It being acknowledged in the Scripture, that "the Labourer is worthy of his Hire," I (who would be the laſt Man in the World to propoſe exorbitant Livings for the Miniſters of the New Church) do concur, that they ſhould be comfortably ſupported. A Miniſter, with a Wife and Family, will require more than a Bachelor; but to fix the Salary is not my intention; this may be left to the diſcretion of every Society; it being my wiſh that all ſhould be happy. So, on the other hand, if we have Labourers amongſt us that do not require it, their Labour is the greater, as it enables the Church to give to others, who have more need. But as it may not be expected to have many of this deſcription at preſent, I ſhall propoſe a plan to enable each Society,

not

not only to grant Proviſion for the Miniſter, but alſo to provide for all their Temporal Concerns, as Books, Rent, &c.--And here I cannot help remarking (and it is with pleaſure) that the Society at Whitefield have eſtabliſhed a Shop to ſell Goods, and the Profits ariſing are intended to build a Temple. The following Plan is ſomething ſimilar, which will enable every Society to have an income equal to their expenditure.

There are no Manufacturing Towns, but are peculiar for ſome Article in Trade, as Mancheſter for Cotton, Halifax for Wool, Birmingham for Metals, &c. and in order to have the Church ſtand on a Temporal Foundation, equal in Correſpondence to its Spiritual one, it ſhould be permanent. I therefore would have its income certain, which might eaſily be managed with good and proper Officers. Thoſe before propoſed would be ſufficient for each Society. Before I give a Plan for each Society to proceed on, I would juſt ſay, by way of argument, ſuppoſe the expenditure of any one Society is 300l. per Annum, and it conſiſts of Three Hundred Members, who regularly ſubſcribe Twenty Shillings each per Annum. It juſt clears itſelf, and all the Members muſt ſubſcribe that Sum as long as they live, or new ones ſucceed, otherwiſe the income is not equal to the expenditure. But to prevent this, if every Member was to advance a Seven years' Subſcription, this Sum, inveſted with the Treaſurer, may be employed in the moſt ſtaple Commodity in that Neighbourhood, under the Direction of the Preſident and other Officers, placing one of the Members, beſt calculated for that purpoſe, as Clerk. This properly attended to, would produce more than 15l. *per Cent. per Annum*, in almoſt any Trade,

with

which would ſupply the expenditure, without the neceſſity of a freſh Subſcription. But ſhould any Society wiſh to promote ſuch a Plan, without having the Power of raiſing this Subſcription, a Subſcription for a leſs number of years, or even the preſent Annual Subſcription, might be ſo appropriated as to increaſe the Fund, which would in Time remove the Neceſſity of continual Subſcriptions; and as new Members came in, the Stock might increaſe, till the Surplus became conſiderable. This taking place, wherever a Society of the New Church is eſtabliſhed, all the Members would encourage it. The Surplus, at the diſcretion of their own Society, might be paid to the Treaſurer General of the Church, to employ commercially, build new Temples, or make any neceſſary Proviſion for the Church at large. On this Plan, many poor Members would be employed, and their Children brought forward to be uſeful. The Rich would aſſiſt the Poor, and in leſs than Seven years, the Church in general, and in particular, would be as independent in Temporal Concerns, as in her Spiritual.

This Plan is by no means recommended as perfect, or the only one by which the effect can be produced. Therefore, I ſhall be glad, if any Society will make their free Remarks on it, or propoſe ſome other to be laid before the next annual Conference of the New Church.

A Letter from Mr. Chaſtenier was read; alſo another from Mr. Salmon.

Mr. William Thompſon moved, that the Committee appointed by the laſt Conference, to act in behalf of the New Church at large, till the preſent Conference do

give

give an Account of their proceedings, together with all Receipts and Expenditures, in behalf of the Conference to the Preſident and Directors, choſen for the enſuing Year, who ſhall examine the ſame, and lay the Proceedings before the next Annual Conference. The Motion was ſeconded by Mr. Thomas Willdon, and paſſed unanimouſly. Mr. Cooper moved that the Terms of Admiſſion to the next General Conference be as follows, (viz.) Every Perſon who is a Reader and Approver of the Theological Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and friendly to the Eſtabliſhment of the New Church, diſtinct from the Old, may be admitted to that Conference, and will have a Right to deliver his Sentiments on all Subjects which may come before the Conference, but thoſe only have a Right to vote, who come as Delegates from the different Societies.

All thoſe who think favorably of the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, but are not yet deſirous of Seperating from the Old Church, may be admitted into the Gallery, but not entitled to ſpeak in that Conference on any Queſtion whatever; yet, if deſirous of having any particular Subject agitated, may procure a Member of the Conference to propoſe the ſame, as it is the deſire of this Meeeting, that every uſeful ſubject may be fairly and fully canvaſſed.

A Motion was made by Mr. Cruden, that Mr. Barthelemon, or ſome other Member of the New Church, be requeſted to ſet to Muſic ſuch of the Pſalms as ſhall be deemed moſt immediately adapted to the New Diſpenſation, and bring them forward, previous to the next Conference, that they may be uſed diſcretionally in

Solemn

Solemn Public Worſhip; Seconded by Mr. Haywood, and unanimouſly agreed to. The Meeting was cloſed with the Lord's Prayer, and adjourned till the next Morning Ten o'Clock.

FRIDAY, *April* 13, 1792=36.

THE Conference met again thi sMorning according to Adjournment. The Meeting was opened with the Lord's Prayer.

A Letter was read from Mr. Chaſtanier.

A Motion was made by Mr. Parker, that the Minutes of this Conference be now read, which was ſeconded by Mr. Thompſon, and agreed to.

The Minutes were accordingly read.

A Circular Letter was brought forward by the Committee, to be ſent to the different Societies of the New Jeruſalem, concerning the Liturgy, Forms of Conſecration of Temples, and of Ordination of Miniſters; which was approved of.

Mr. Hoyle moved that the Minutes of the preſent Conference be ſigned by the Preſident, and any other Members who approve of the ſame.

This Motion was ſeconded by Mr. Cooper, and unanimouſly agreed to.

Mr. Robert Hindmarſh, Secretary to the laſt Committee, brought in his Accounts for the paſt Year, and delivered over the balance to the Preſident.

Mr. Young moved, That the Conference, having finiſhed ſuch Buſineſs as has been brought forward before them, now transfer the Buſineſs of the Church at large,

to the President and Directors for the year ensuing, and impower them to call a Conference to meet next Easter Monday (or before if necessary) at such place as they may think most suitable. Seconded by Mr. Wright, and unanimously agreed to.

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For the Information of those who may be inclined to leave any Legacies for the Benefit of the New Church, otherwise called the New Jerusalem, it is thought proper to give the Form of a Clause for this Purpose.

Item, I give and bequeath unto A. B. *and* C. D. *the Sum of* *to be raised and paid out of my personal Estate and Effects, which by Law I may or can charge with the Payment thereof, upon Trust, and to the Intent, that they or either of them do pay the same to any one of the Committee for the Time being, appointed by the General Conference of the Members of the New Church, called the New Jerusalem, held yearly in the said Church in London, or to the Order of any one of the said Committee; which said Sum I desire may be applied towards carrying on the benevolent Designs of the Members of the said New Church, called the New Jerusalem.*

N. B. Giving Lands, or Money, or Stock, by Will, to be laid out in the Purchase of any real Estate for the above Purpose, will be void by the Mortmain Laws; but Money or Stock may be given by Will, without being directed to be so laid out.

The Conference concluded with the Lord's Prayer, and was adjourned to Easter Monday next the of April, 1793=37.

Signed

Signed, in Behalf of the Conference, by

ANTHONY HUNT, of Briſtol, Preſident,
MANOAH SIBLY, of London,
ROBERT BRANT, of Briſtol,
JOSEPH PROUD, of Birmingham,
} Miniſters,
SAMUEL HANDS, Birmingham,
THOMAS WRIGHT, of Wirkſworth,
JOHN BELLAMY, London,
JOHN HOYLE, Junior,
JOHN WILLDON,
JAMES KELSON,
CHARLES HORFORD,
JOHN WILLIAMSON,
ROBERT BURTON COOPER,
JOHN BRAGG,
HENRY PECKITT,
JAMES CRUDEN,
JOHN HAYWOOD,
THOMAS WILLDON,
—— RICHARDSON,
WILLIAM MOTT,
ABRAHAM PERKINS,
WILLIAM THOMPSON,
JOHN HAWKINS,
GEORGE FULLILOVE,
THOMAS YOUNG.